

Harvard College Marathon Challenge

Post-Event Survey Summary

2008

Questions/Complaints/Blame? E-Mail marathon@harvard.edu

Website: <http://marathon.harvard.edu>

OVERVIEW: HARVARD COLLEGE MARATHON CHALLENGE (HCMC)

Harvard College Marathon Challenge (HCMC) started in 2005. HCMC participants raise money for Project HEALTH and Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA), two charities that mean a great deal to many Harvard students and employees. In exchange for their successful fundraising efforts, HCMC participants receive official invitational entries (numbered bibs) to run in the Boston Marathon. These invitation entries allow participants to run the Boston Marathon at their own pace; they are exempt from the time-qualifying requirement by virtue of their charitable fundraising efforts. In 2007-08, HCMC participants raised approximately \$45,000 to benefit PBHA and Project HEALTH.

To ensure diversity, HCMC participants were selected by a process that took into account student vs. staff status, year of graduation, residential affiliation, past PBHA/Project HEALTH involvement, gender, previous running/marathon experience, and especially demonstrated prior commitment to the HCMC program. Each participant paid a nonrefundable registration fee and met several interim fundraising benchmarks, culminating in a final fundraising benchmark that ranged from \$750 for participants who joined very late – some less than two weeks before the Marathon – to \$2500 for undergraduate "veteran" participants.

Throughout the months prior to the Marathon, participants used the HCMC listserv as arrange training runs and to discuss a wide range of training, fundraising, and related issues. In addition to the listserv, HCMC held several brief meetings. Notwithstanding the meetings and fundraising benchmarks, participants were free to choose and vary over time their levels of involvement in HCMC's training, fundraising, and community-building activities.

In the weeks following the 2008 Boston Marathon, HCMC participants were invited to complete an online survey that asked about their overall HCMC experiences. Twenty-six of twenty-seven HCMC participants (96%) responded. What follows are:

- the survey instrument (pp. 2-3)
- a respondent table linking respondents with their answers to the closed-ended questions (p. 4)
- a statistical summary of responses to the closed-ended questions (p. 5)
- responses to all the open-ended questions, edited only as necessary to protect privacy and to correct obvious spelling and typographical errors (pp. 6-35).

2008 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – SURVEY QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS (please read):

As an official Harvard College Marathon Challenge (HCMC) participant, you put forth a tremendous amount of effort training, fundraising, and (for those who weren't injured or ill) running the Marathon. You sacrificed a great deal to make HCMC become a reality for yourself, and you should feel proud! It is in this spirit that we ask you to take the time to complete this survey while HCMC is still fresh in your mind (and in your body!). To ensure your responses are as complete and lucid as possible, please take this survey when your mind is clear and you're not feeling rushed or preoccupied with other pressing things.

When responding to the questions below, please be as specific, honest, and realistic as possible. Know with certainty that no egos will be bruised or damaged as a result of anything you write, so please don't sugar-coat your negative or constructive feedback. Likewise, please feel fully comfortable sharing the depth and breadth of your positive sentiments. It's perfectly fine if some of your answers are redundant, and it's also okay to go off on tangents. The "Golden Rule" when completing this survey is to *please elaborate rather than edit yourself, because hearing more from you is better than hearing less from you! We're interested in unique perspectives just as much as the patterns/themes that are shared among HCMC participants.*

The results will be available after they've been compiled.

THANK YOU in advance for your thoughtful remarks and valuable time! Your feedback really *is* important and really *does* matter, especially to future HCMC participants. Remember, HCMC is *always* a work in progress!

1. Thinking back, what initially led you to participate in HCMC?
2. Please reflect upon your overall HCMC experience [Note: "overall HCMC experience" encompasses everything from the time you joined HCMC through Marathon Day].
3. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *general mood*?
4. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *self-perception (confidence, self-worth, perceived abilities, etc.)*?
5. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *time management and organizational skills*?
6. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *academic performance (or job performance, if you're an employee)*?
7. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *drinking (alcohol) and partying*?
8. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect you *otherwise (eating, sleeping, daily routine, social relationships, general thinking, etc.– whatever)*?
9. If I had to go back and decide again, I [**would; would not**] have participated in HCMC this past year.
10. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being your *absolute worst* actual Harvard experience so far and 10 being your *very best* actual Harvard experience so far, how would you rate your overall HCMC experience?
11. What was the *best* part of your HCMC experience, and what made it so great?
12. What was the *worst* part of your HCMC experience, why was it so bad, and how could it have been better?
13. In retrospect, what (if anything) could/would/should *you* have done differently to improve your HCMC experience?
14. In the future, what can *HCMC* do to improve?

2008 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – SURVEY QUESTIONS

15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for PBHA and Project HEALTH, and (iii) building a running community. Hearing this, what (if anything) comes to mind in light of your own HCMC experience this past year?
16. Please comment on the listserv (e.g., whether being required to post 2 runs/week was useful, why you did or didn't feel comfortable posting to the listserv, how the listserv was most or least useful to you, etc.).
17. Please share any comments you have about the specific deals that various businesses offered us (e.g., the New Balance discount, the fruit shakes at b.good).
18. What brief advice or words of wisdom would you give to potential HCMC participants?
19. Please describe any mental or physical strategies that you used on Marathon Day, either before or during your run (for example, adhering to a particular running-to-walking ratio, thinking motivating thoughts, working the crowd, saying positive things to yourself, visualizing certain images, performing a pre-Marathon ritual or routine, etc.). Be as specific as possible.
20. What else is on your mind about HCMC? Radical ideas, idiosyncrasies, comments about the afterparty, the care you received at UHS, etc. – anything goes!
21. I paid the HCMC Registration Fee and/or set up my personal fundraising page [**before; after**] January 1st of this year.
22. This was the [**1st; 2nd; 3rd; 4th or more**] year in which I was an official HCMC participant.
23. Please tell us if you crossed the Boston Marathon Starting Line this year and, if so, whether you crossed the Finish Line. [**I crossed both the Starting Line & the Finish Line; I crossed the Starting Line, but I didn't finish; I didn't run the Boston Marathon this year**]
24. Would you ever run another full marathon (26.2 miles) again? [**definitely; probably; 50/50; doubtful; no way!**]
25. If you were offered a slot in next year's Harvard College Marathon Challenge, would you accept it? [**I won't be at Harvard next year (ineligible); definitely; probably; 50/50; doubtful; no way!**]
26. Partly or wholly as a result of my HCMC participation, I will volunteer with PBHA or Project Health. [**I won't be at Harvard next year (N/A); nope; doubtful; probably; definitely; I already do & will continue to volunteer with PBHA or Project HEALTH**]
27. My current Harvard College affiliation is [**1-FR=freshman; 2-SO=sophomore; 3-JR=junior; 4-SR=senior; 5-PR=proctor; 6-TU=resident tutor; 7-RD=resident dean; 8-OG=other Harvard grad student; 9-OE=other Harvard employee; 10-NA=none of the above**].
28. What's your name (optional)? [If you self-identify and fully completed this survey, you'll automatically be eligible to win a pair of movie tickets or a restaurant gift certificate.]
29. If you provided your name, may we attribute your comments to you when reporting survey results? [**yes; no; I didn't provide my name**]

Before clicking "Submit," please ask yourself if you were honest, specific, realistic, and thorough in your answers. If you weren't, could you please revise your answers accordingly?

THANKS AGAIN!

SUBMIT

Reset

2008 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – RESPONDENT TABLE &
CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

Important Note: The respondent numbers in the left column of this table correspond with the response numbers throughout the rest of this document, so you can link responses with specific respondents throughout the document.

Respondent	Question 9 <i>Would have done HCMC if I had to re-decide</i>	Question 10 <i>Overall rating, 1=worst, 10=best</i>	Question 21 <i>Joined HCMC before/after January 1st</i>	Question 22 <i># of years doing HCMC</i>	Question 23 <i>Crossed Start Line/ Finish Line</i>	Question 24 <i>Desire to run another marathon</i>	Question 25 <i>Desire to run with HCMC next year</i>	Question 26 <i>Will become more involved w/charities</i>	Question 27 <i>Harvard College affiliation</i>
1	yes	9	after	1	yes/yes	probably	definitely	probably	1-FR
2	yes	9	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	already	2-SO
3	yes	8	before	1	yes/yes	50/50	50/50	already	1-FR
4	yes	8	before	1	yes/yes	50/50	50/50	yes	3-JR
5	yes	8	after	1	yes/yes	probably	definitely	no	1-FR
6	yes	9	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	N/A	4-SR
7	yes	8	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	doubtful	doubtful	1-FR
8	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	probably	already	3-JR
9	yes	8	before	1	no/no	definitely	definitely	probably	3-JR
10	yes	10	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	ineligible	N/A	4-SR
11	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	ineligible	already	2-SO
12	yes	9	before	2	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	already	2-SO
13	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	already	3-JR
14	yes	8	before	1	no/no	definitely	definitely	already	1-FR
15	yes	7	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	probably	N/A	10-NA
16	yes	9	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	probably	2-SO
17	yes	5	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	ineligible	N/A	4-SR
18	yes	10	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	probably	already	3-JR
19	no	6	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	ineligible	no	4-SR
20	yes	9	after	2	yes/yes	definitely	probably	probably	9-OE
21	yes	10	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	probably	1-FR
22	yes	9	after	1	yes/yes	definitely	ineligible	N/A	4-SR
23	yes	8	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	probably	already	2-SO
24	yes	9	before	1	yes/no	probably	definitely	already	2-SO
25	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	probably	probably	doubtful	2-SO
26	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	probably	50/50	already	2-SO

Results summary for closed-ended questions (n=26 respondents):

9. If I had to go back and decide again, I [**would=96%; would not=4%**] have participated in HCMC this past year.
10. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being your *absolute worst* actual Harvard experience so far and 10 being your *very best* actual Harvard experience so far, how would you rate your overall HCMC experience? **mean rating = 8.5**
21. I paid the HCMC Registration Fee and/or set up my personal fundraising page [**before=50%; after=50%**] January 1st of this year.
22. This was the [**1st=77%, 2nd=23%; 3rd=0%; 4th or more=0%**] year in which I was an official HCMC participant.
23. I [**did=88%; did not=12%**] cross the Boston Marathon Finish Line this year. *[Of the 3 respondents who did not cross the Finish Line, 2 chose not to run the Marathon at all. Therefore, 23 of the 24 respondents who crossed the Starting Line also crossed the Finish Line.]*
24. Would you ever run another full marathon (26.2 miles) again? [**definitely=73%; probably=19%; 50/50=8%; doubtful=0%; no way!=0%**]
25. If you were offered a slot in next year's Harvard College Marathon Challenge, would you accept it? [**ineligible=19%; definitely=42%; probably=23%; 50/50=12%; doubtful=4%; no way!=0%**]
26. Partly or wholly as a result of my HCMC participation, I will volunteer with PBHA or Project Health. [**I won't be at Harvard next year (N/A)=19%; nope=8%; doubtful=8%; probably=19%; definitely=4%; I already do & will continue to volunteer with PBHA or Project HEALTH=42%**]
27. My current Harvard College affiliation is [**1-FR=freshman=23%; 2-SO=sophomore=31%; 3-JR=junior=19%; 4-SR=senior=19%; 5-PR=proctor=0%; 6-TU=resident tutor=0%; 7-RD=resident dean=0%; 8-OG=other Harvard grad student=0%; 9-OE=other Harvard employee=4%; 10-NA=none of the above=4%**]

1. Thinking back, what initially led you to participate in HCMC?

1. I got the email about the last minute marathon spots and just thought it might be fun and challenging to run it.
2. I ran track and cross country in high school, and running a marathon seemed to be the next logical step in my athletic career. I've wanted to run a marathon since I was in high school, and HCMC offered a great opportunity to acquire an official number as well as raise money for an important cause.
3. I wanted to do something kind of crazy that I didn't believe I could do. I love working out...so this seemed perfect. Besides, the Boston Marathon is such a great tradition!
4. I wanted to do something big, something that had a purpose bigger than myself, and HCMC provided a perfect opportunity. Without climbing, I didn't have anything physical to really push myself with, and this certainly filled that niche in my life (in spades).
5. I wanted to do the Boston Marathon but was not really actively seeking it out, so when there where offers of slots over email, i went for it.
6. I had already qualified, but felt I wanted to run for something more - and saw the opportunity to join HCMC as a great way to justify my participation on another level while involving myself in a great community.
7. I love running. I had run all through high school, and I wanted to continue. When there was an opening in January, I took it.
8. I really wanted to run the marathon once before graduating. I thought I'd apply and see if I got a slot.
9. After seeing so many people run Boston, I decided I could also run a marathon. And now, Boston's THE marathon to run. I wanted to be able that to say to myself: I aimed, I trained, and I finished. I would have applied last year, but I learned about HCMC a little late.
10. I joined HCMC eleven days before the start of the race. I was inspired to do so by the charitable cause and by my athletic ambition/curiosity. Most of all, I ran in memory of my grandmothers. One had a rare muscular illness that left her paralyzed; the other was throughout her life a lover of long walks and the outdoors. I felt they were with me every step of the way.
11. I had always hoped to run a marathon "someday" and then my roommate told me about HCMC, and the thought of putting a definite date on that goal was so exciting that we just decided to enter the lottery together.
12. From day one, back in my freshman year, it was a whim to complete one of my college goals: to run a marathon. This year, it was my memories of excitement, ecstasy, and enthusiasm surrounding the entire event last year. Running marathon number two presented me with an opportunity to do everything differently and/or better than last year. Better friends, better unity in HCMC, better training, and (although this wasn't a focus) better time. Running marathons has becomes this incredibly beautiful event in my life that is so amazing and rewarding to share with friends, fans, and fellow HCMCers. I think the most specific answer to this question is that I was seeking to challenge myself again and to try to get even more out of HCMC than I did the first time around.
13. I really wanted to run the Boston Marathon, but I knew I wasn't likely to time-qualify.
14. I was looking for a community of runners and had run a marathon before.
15. I was a late acceptance to the HCMC (very late!) So, I had already trained for the marathon. When the opportunity came to get a number and to maybe give back to Harvard, I jumped at the chance.
16. I really wanted to run the Boston Marathon, and getting to run my first marathon while raising money for two amazing charities was an awesome opportunity.
17. To challenge myself while doing something good for others
18. My roommate ran it last year, and I was really inspired by his dedication and his training routine. I thought I could do the same thing cause he put aside a lot of his work to do the marathon.
19. I was offered a space at the last minute and was really excited about running a marathon.

1. Thinking back, what initially led you to participate in HCMC?

20. I have run with the HCMC in the past and it was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. If given another chance, I knew I would not pass it up.
21. At first, I really wanted to race and stay in as good of shape as my friends running in college. Eventually, I found out running the marathon gave me a serious goal not just for running, but in life, and it made me not think anymore about what the point of running every day was.
22. I was planning on running in Boston and this gave me a way to run while raising money for a good cause.
23. Growing up in Cambridge, running Boston has been a lifelong goal. HCMC was a great way to accomplish this goal, while raising money for an organization I love very much, the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter.
24. I really wanted to join a running community and complete a marathon!
25. the challenge of running the marathon was very appealing. HCMC gave me a chance to do Boston and I jumped.
26. I just wanted to keep running, and I thought that the marathon was a good goal for the year. Also, I had worked with PBHA in the past and it was great that HCMC gave me the chance to raise money for an organization that meant something to me.

2. Please reflect upon your overall HCMC experience [Note: "overall HCMC experience" encompasses everything from the time you joined HCMC through Marathon Day].

1. From what I've experienced, HCMC is a very accepting and fun group. I felt welcomed when I joined and had a wonderful time meeting everyone and running the marathon.
2. Because I joined very late, I did not train as much with the team as I might have liked. However, even though I only met the other team members for a short while, I found everyone to be extremely supportive, and I got a lot of advice and encouragement from the team. The race was a lot of fun, it was great to run with people that I knew.
3. I went through periods of being very nervous to a lot of excitement. It was more emotional than I thought it would be! Particularly in the days right before the marathon.
4. HCMC was overall an absolutely positively INCREDIBLE experience. I was never someone who found the training that hard (although my body and my knee begged to differ) and never doubted that I could complete the 26.2 miles. My whole concern was running a 'decent time' (which I defined as under 4 hours). On race day though, the crowd took over and even though my knee crapped out and I barely broke 5 hours, I still finished with a massive smile on my face and I'm still floating on cloud 9.
5. It was great. I didn't get so much into the running community since I was only in for 2 weeks but it was really fun and exciting especially on race day.
6. HCMC was a great experience overall, albeit perhaps a different one for me than for many. I joined (at least officially) quite late, and served in many respects as more of a resource than a rookie, as I had run New York in November. This is not to say it wasn't a great experience - I learned a lot about my own marathon strategies and goals as a result of my conversations and being forced to justify various plans - but rather to emphasize that my experience may not be diagnostic of the traditional or "target" HCMC experience. Still, I think it will always serve HCMC well to have a few marathon veterans with various experiences on board, as this provides a diversity of viewpoints on running, preparation, and recovery that means the different ways runners react to the marathon might all find an understanding ear and rational advice.
7. Amazing experience. The dedication to training took a lot of discipline, but it was amazingly rewarding. My race did not go very well, but I learned valuable lessons for my next marathon. However, I had issues with fundraising, as I did not know many people on campus.
8. HCMC was wonderful. The participants were a joy to run with, meetings were no burden and frequently had delicious pizza and marathon day was one of the best days of my life.
9. I really like HCMC. I love the community and the friends I have made ([name redacted], you're an awesome person!). I enjoyed all the times I got to run/chill with the fellow runners. Waking up every day to see runs posted on the listserv is pretty awesome, and it definitely kept me disciplined. Raising money was a lot tougher than I expected, but I learned quite a few things from that. I guess I sort of expected everyone would just open their wallets and donate, so that was a little stressful (especially as the deadlines neared). I hate not having being able to run the marathon. I got injured twice, which was really bad, and put me out of running for quite a bit. The first time was shin-splints that were quite bad, but new shoes w/insoles fixed that quickly. The second time around, I tore a tendon in my ankle/foot, and I had to pull out of HCMC. Ack.
10. Though I joined HCMC eleven days before the start of the race, I instantly felt like I was part of a special community filled with great people. I was unable to attend many of the pre-marathon meetings but I was able to connect with several runners on the bus ride over. Above all, my HCMC experience taught me how selfless and team-oriented running can be: I ran half the race with a friend from New York (who then sped ahead!) and the other half with an HCMC runner I was lucky enough to meet along the way (and whom I had never met before!!). We instantly connected goal- and pace-wise (it turned out we both had joined 11 days before the race!!), and we carried each other to the finish.
11. Overall, it was incredible. Finally having a running community was really exciting - I had searched for one unsuccessfully all of freshman year, but this year I was actually able to run with others and meet a lot of amazing people. I loved it.

2. Please reflect upon your *overall* HCMC experience [Note: "*overall HCMC experience*" encompasses everything from the time you joined HCMC through Marathon Day].

12. Increasingly marvelous! I was deeply happy with the unity and friendship that blossomed among this year's participants. I cemented friendships with acquaintances and made wonderful new friends. Yes, there were days when I did not want to go out and run, when 7 am runs were haunting my dreams, but it's so amazing to get to the starting line and realize how WORTH IT all of those crappy days were. Training for a marathon is such a holistic experience in understanding self and body, and I learn so much about myself as I undertake it. HCMC has made my college experience.
13. It was great! I was really happy to have the listserv to find running buddies. There wasn't really much in the way of administrative hoops to jump through. Fundraising wasn't so difficult. And then the actual marathon itself was so amazing, it made all of the hard work training totally worthwhile.
14. HCMC has been great - a low pressure, community of athletes that love being outside.
15. Except for the misunderstanding regarding how the donations worked, it was an inspiring and very positive experience.
16. I only joined a few weeks ago, but the people were amazing and helpful and really simplified the whole experience.
17. my overall experience lasted 10 days. it was painful yet rewarding
18. Amazing, the most rigorous and meaningful thing I've personally done in my life. I can't stress how good this feels afterward and how accomplished you feel.
19. It was brief but positive!
20. I joined very late as 9 additional spots were granted to the HCMC just two weeks in advance of Marathon Monday.
21. It was one of the best experiences of my life, starting from meeting new people instead of having to go out for runs myself. That made me run a lot more in the second semester. Without HCMC, I wouldn't have run 50 miles every week. Running is part of my life, and it is no longer an option not to run at least 5 times a week.
22. The list is great - good advice and lots of inspiration on it. I didn't do any runs with people, although hearing about different routes was nice.
23. It was a wonderful experience. While I didn't participate in the HCMC community as much as I probably should have up until the Marathon, I still appreciated knowing there was a body of people struggling with similar challenges and raising similar questions. It was a great experience.
24. I loved it! The people are amazing, and I loved getting used to long runs.
25. It was incredible. I loved the companionship of the 25 other runners. I loved the fact that I was able to do some sort of community service work, even if it was only raising money. I loved running and finishing the marathon (really the best feeling in the world!). HCMC was incredible. I just can't stress that enough.
26. My overall HCMC experience was wonderful. I went on a number of runs with a number of people, and running with company is always better than running without it. On long runs in particular, I was very happy to have people to talk to along the way. Aside from that, the listserv was an excellent resource whenever I had questions. Feedback was abundant and almost instant. Finally, marathon day was amazing because running Boston is a wonderful experience and because I ran with other HCMC participants for the entire race. Running with people that I knew made it SO MUCH BETTER. We started off together as a group of about six, which later shrank to three and then two. The one person who ran with me the entire way (an HCMC participant who had run with me on a few training runs) really pushed me and was monumental in helping me tackle the hills and last few miles.

3. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *general mood*?

1. I had been really stressed about final papers and exams before I did the marathon, but afterwards I felt so much less stressed having met some new interesting people (and cause I now have a marathon under my belt :D)
2. I feel more confident - I know I can finish a marathon, and now I want to train to qualify as an official athlete. I feel good about myself and others - seeing the spectators (complete strangers) support me and help me through the race was extremely inspiring.
3. It was AWESOME to be around so many people who cared about this. Im glad I decided to join the group rather than ever try this alone.
4. It kept me sane while studying for the MCAT (which I took the Saturday before Marathon Monday). Don't ever think you can't fit the training into your busy life, it actually helps you schedule and prioritize.
5. It added a bit of risk and excitement to the past two weeks.
6. It didn't alter my mood that much, though, as a result of participation both official and unofficial, I was able to run with a great group of people on occasion as part of what was normally a very solitary training experience.
7. Every time I went for a run, I felt infinitely happier and more relaxed. Even if my body was tired from a 20 mile training run, I still felt great mentally. Completely worth it. However, when it came time to ask dozens of people for fundraising, it got a little frustrating.
8. Having a long term training goal made me more focused and disciplined in both my running and school work since I knew I needed to take care of myself.
9. I felt my mood was happy, energetic, stable. My performance in school had certainly improved. However, both times that I was injured and not running, I was a bit of a mess; I felt tired, irritable, and generally low. I also did not do many workouts back then, so that probably explains it.
10. HCMC has (ironically!) tremendously increased my overall energy and positive vibe -- I find myself going outside more and putting into context difficult tasks/experiences. Some scholars have argued that marathon competitors become "depressed" after races because they have "achieved their goal" and have "to find a new one." To the contrary, I find myself excited to finally see running as a SPORT with unlimited goals -- as opposed to a masochistic means of weight loss or a semi-hobby. I now see running as truly fun.
11. Exercising always makes me feel good, and having a goal to work for made everything seem even more worthwhile. At times it was more stressful, but overall I think that HCMC elevated my general mood, both while exercising and in daily life.
12. As I said, there were times when I was cranky both about going out on runs but also about not being at a fitness level that satisfied me. I would go through periods of stress about not having run enough or being in good enough shape. Overall, though, I think that regimented exercise has always contributed to brightening my mood (not that it needs much help, usually). I tended to feel better about myself and found that I had this wonderful experience that I could share with other people. I think my mood also significantly benefited from being part of such a rich and diverse running community that was so generous with its time and energy.
13. I'm not sure how much it affected my mood. Running definitely makes me happy, but I was running more or less every day before joining HCMC as well. In the weeks right before the marathon, I felt really nervous about the race -- what if I can't do it, etc. Now that I have done it I feel amazing!
14. Great! Running with buddies is always great, and watching the marathon choked me right up.
15. I get totally excited about the Marathon and was thrilled to see how generous my friends and the friends of my daughters were.
16. My general mood was not all that affected.
17. i was in pain and i am still in deep recovery. i'll be alright though, it was wonderful

3. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *general mood*?

18. I'll admit when you have a tough week, you get pretty stressed that you're missing a scheduled run and that it'll affect your future performance. Plus it does take a good amount of time for training when you get into your high mileage weeks. However, I personally never felt distressed or depressed or anything, just tired after a long week of work and running. But after the marathon, you feel elated - the best personal feelings of your life.
19. Running the marathon put me in a really good mood and gave me a lot of motivation?
20. My mood was immediately elevated when I heard that I was awarded an official slot.
21. Running makes me much more self-confident, much more motivated, and much more relaxed. I always recommend it to my stressed out roommates but they never listen.
22. It got me psyched for the marathon!
23. On weeks that I got a good amount of mileage in, I definitely felt more upbeat, organized, and energetic.
24. I definitely was more tired, but long runs were great for improving bad days.
25. I need to exercise to not be an absolute terror and the motivation that HCMC offered, both in the end goal of training for the marathon and in the encouragement of other runners to keep going, made sure I got out there and keep exercising so that my mood remained stably happy.
26. Running gives me the feeling that I have accomplished something. It was nice to know that I was active and in shape. I am a firm believer that working out, running, staying in shape, etc. is a huge self-esteem booster. When you feel like you are in shape and accomplishing something, you feel better overall.

4. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *self-perception (confidence, self-worth, perceived abilities, etc.)*?

1. Participating in the marathon that I can achieve a lot more than I think; it's all just mental.
2. I definitely have more robust confidence in myself as a runner, as a fund-raiser, and as a person in general.
3. I am more confident, I achieved something I didn't believe I could!
4. I felt like a serious athlete again, which was great.
5. I am glad to know I can run a marathon in under 4 hours. I don't think my overall view of myself changed at all though.
6. HCMC helped me feel more like a resource than a self-centered marathoner (as did running for charity), which was a great change in my experience overall.
7. I told myself that I would eventually run marathons. I just didn't know when. Now I know what I am capable of as a distance runner, and I plan on running more marathons.
8. After completing the long training runs and the marathon itself I was amazed by how far I had come and how much more I could accomplish than I thought.
9. The experience was really helpful for me; I felt I was doing something challenging, important, and enriching, so it boosted my self-confidence. I realized I am not as careful with my own training as I predicted, because I definitely would have done a few things that could have prevented my injuries. I over-committed myself physically by doing several IMs and bhangra dance. I also did not reduce my intensity or rest when I felt especially sore. I did not plan my running schedule well in advance, which was foolish in retrospect. All of these may have contributed to my injuries, and I suppose it's good to know I need to learn to set limits for myself.
10. Running the race so well after signing up only 11 days before gave me a lot of confidence. It showed me that, with more training, I could become a very strong runner next time around and qualify for Boston on my own. I am planning to train this summer and run the BayState Marathon in October.
11. It's an amazing feeling to be able to run 14, 16, 20, 26.2 miles - so accomplishing those runs was pretty amazing, and definitely a confidence booster. At the same time, there was more pressure on each run/workout, so when they didn't go as well that was more frustrating than before I had an ultimate goal.
12. I felt GREAT after runs. Even if the run itself didn't go that well, I always had the knowledge at the end of the day that I was making my way through a major event in my life. It is really nice to feel like you have something that is an entirely unique experience and accomplishment among non-HCMC friends. I don't mean in a brag-about-it way, but just in the way that what's so special about Harvard is the manifold interesting things that people do. This is my interesting thing. And I LOVE that about myself.
13. During all the training, my self-perception didn't really change, because I still wasn't sure if I would make it to race day without injury, and then whether I'd be able to finish it. But now that I did it, I feel GREAT!
14. Exercise is the best thing for mental health/confidence!
15. Running the marathon for me gives me confidence to overcome obstacles of any kind. As I run it, I wonder if I can really do it. When I finish, I realize that if I can finish a marathon, I can face any challenge that comes my way.
16. I definitely feel more self-confidence and like I can really achieve things I want to do.
17. it confirmed what i expected. i have never been a quitter, however, the marathon helped to reassure myself... which never hurts
18. It makes you so much more confident in yourself, so much more willing to take risks. I had never run long-distance before this, and I ran it slower than most. However, from about the half-way point til who knows when, you feel this unnatural confidence in yourself that you can do anything. I now have thoughts of Iron Man competitions and all sorts of crazy things.
19. Not really at all.
20. Participating in group runs as well as the listserv is a fantastic build-up to and event that boosts one's confidence more than just about anything - the Boston Marathon.

4. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *self-perception* (confidence, self-worth, perceived abilities, etc.)?

21. I usually think I am lazy and cannot motivate myself to go out and run all the time, but because I knew I was going to run the marathon, I went out on the coldest days of the year and in the snow. I felt much tougher, sort of like back in HS XC days.
22. Training definitely increased my confidence
23. Completing a marathon is no small challenge. I definitely feel like I have an improved understanding of my abilities, which probably contributes in some way to my sense of self confidence. I guess it really remains to be seen though.
24. I definitely became more self-confident as I learned how far I could push my body
25. Training for and running the marathon gave me an athletic identity for the first time since high school; now I am a marathon runner, and, though I was hesitant to tell people I was training for the marathon (I felt as if it was bragging) I still thought of myself as a "marathon runner" which definitely helped to boost my self-confidence and give a stronger sense of identity.
26. Training for and running a marathon was definitely a confidence booster. I feel like I have pushed myself beyond my previous physical limits and it is a wonderful feeling.

5 How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *time management and organizational skills*?

1. Did really affect me in these ways.
2. I found that I was more efficient with my time while I was training than when I was not, which is surprising.
3. Not that much, but I DID really have to build my homework around my workouts.
4. I managed to train while simultaneously studying for an MCAT that I took two days before the marathon. If anything it helped me prioritize other aspects of my life tremendously.
5. I don't know if it had an effect.
6. Marathon-training in general is a schedule-altering enterprise, and I don't know how much my decision to take part in HCMC (vs. running with my qualified time alone) changed that. That being said, understanding that the only way for many folks to get a shot at the marathon is through programs like HCMC, I feel licensed to share that the opportunity to run the marathon is life-altering now only physically and emotionally, but also mentally - it shows how dedication to an activity at which many are relatively new can help shift one's days around, and also how devoting significant time to an activity can help give your days a structure they might have otherwise lacked. Overall, I highly recommend HCMC (and serious/dedicated marathon training in general) from the perspective of time-management and organizational skills.
7. I was able to manage my time adequately, since my courseload was not as great as it will be in the future. I have qualms about future years, however, when I will have difficult classes and other commitments.
8. My time management was greatly improved by having to balance training with the regular Harvard workload. Organization did not improve. I nearly lost my bib number the night before the race.
9. I'm disorganized and a mess with time management. I was that way the past year, and I still am. But, when I was running, at least I planned my runs almost a week in advance. I woke up and slept early, so training definitely got into a healthy rhythm.
10. As I joined HCMC eleven days before the start of the race, I can only say that HCMC has given me more energy to complete my tasks.
11. It forced me to wake up earlier and try to be more efficient throughout the day.
12. This realm has always been a strong suit of mine, especially since I've been an athlete my entire life. It just kept me disciplined to more of the same. I imagine that I wouldn't have woken up quite so early every morning if I knew that I didn't have to run, but I don't think that it was a major changing factor in my life.
13. I think it helped me to manage my time better. You have to be more efficient if you're going to devote three hours to a long-run (and then be totally wiped afterwards).
14. It didn't.
15. It is very hard to find the time to train and then to write the emails about the fund-raising was a real stretch, since I had only 11 days to complete it all.
16. Because I joined HCMC so late in my marathon training, I don't think HCMC had as much an impact as the general marathon training, which did require some rearranging of other things. But once I found the schedule that worked and made to-do lists so I could keep on top of everything, I was fine.
17. nothing at all. it began and ending so fast
18. It made me more aware of schoolwork and extracurriculars and how much time they took. It made me realize that perhaps doing a thesis wasn't right for me, maybe I should drop that extra activity that would cause me to be stressed. Overall, you become a lot more aware of things that could be taking your time unnecessarily, and you try to avoid those things. So in that sense it really improves your time management.
19. Not really at all.
20. Posting runs regularly and attending them regularly takes discipline and dedication. These values certainly improve one's time management and organizational skills.
21. Not much, I usually exercise every day for my sanity. I am lazy and procrastinate no matter what circumstance.

5 How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *time management and organizational skills*?

22. Training was the one thing that took precedence over all else - but it being senior spring, there wasn't much to conflict with :)
23. Weeks I was training heavily I was much better at managing my time. It helped me settle into a useful routine.
24. I learned to plan my day around exercise and was probably more efficient in doing other things.
25. I had to get everything done before midnight at night (so I could wake up early to run) so HCMC definitely made me efficiently plan my week and day down to the minute. Definitely forced me to plan better; can't say I became more efficient though...
26. It was great for my time management and organizational skills. Training for a marathon got me into a regimen that proved very manageable.

6. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *academic performance (or job performance, if you're an employee)*?

1. I feel much more motivated to do school work now that I've ran the marathon. This could just be that I'm too sore to do anything else though...
2. I believe I became a more efficient student, we'll see how my grades turn out this semester I suppose
3. Not much. I would work out anyways, but I felt a little more obligated than usual, and I'm glad because working out is great for the mentality.
4. I've done better academically this year than any previous year.
5. no effect
6. Not at all - as alluded to in the previous response, in spite of time dedicated to a new activity that might otherwise have gone "elsewhere," the reality is that I spent far less time procrastinating and gave my days (and my academic work) a drive and sense of purpose as a sort of linked trait to the dedication I was forced to give my marathon training.
7. Little effect. I might have slightly higher grades this term had I not put in the training, but that's about it. It will be different though next year.
8. If anything, marginally improved.
9. My grades are higher this year than last year and freshman year, and I'm guessing that has something to do with HCMC. Maybe not, but I know that I was not working as late very often because of my running. Injuries did throw me off a bit, though.
10. As I joined HCMC eleven days before the start of the race, I can only say that HCMC has given me more energy to complete my tasks.
11. Somewhat negatively, although this may have just been a sophomore slump overall. Especially during the week before marathon I prioritized sleep/exercise over work and fell behind, but this happened at other points. Also, going on long runs (especially the first ones above 11) tired me out for a long time and I had a tough time getting work done those weekends.
12. Again, I don't really have anything to compare it to. I have either been rowing or training for a marathon my entire college career, so I don't really know what my academic performance would be like otherwise. I think, though, that my performance is largely connected to my time management and organizational skills, so if training makes people more organized, I imagine that their performance would improve.
13. I do think that knowing that I had to complete x number of runs made me more efficient with my work. But I still spent a lot of time running which I could have spent working, so it probably also undermined my academics. I would say that on balance it probably helped me slightly in terms of academic performance.
14. I think HCMC may have affected academic/job performance in that running with classmates makes a great study break/brain-clearer, much more so than running alone.
15. My colleagues were incredibly supportive -- they stood along the course and gave me a present when I finished.
16. I think it had little to no effect on my academics.
17. not all all
18. Not much. I studied the same amount as I had in previous years, but just cut out stupid distractions like youtube videos (which i still watched, but not as much).
19. Training for a marathon does take away from the time I spend on academic work, but I think it's definitely worth it.
20. Exercise in general will improve academic and job performance. Running, by far, produces more endorphins than any other form of exercise for me.
21. I have gotten used to balancing exercise + school, so there is not much difference.
22. It didn't really affect it
23. I'm not sure my academic performance was substantially affected by my participation in HCMC.
24. I have not done extraordinarily well in the later part of this semester, but I don't think this is due to HCMC or extra running.
25. I don't think it made a difference.
26. It might just be coincidence, but my academic performance has improved a good amount. My grades this year are noticeably better than last year.

7. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *drinking (alcohol) and partying*?

1. I didn't drink before and I still don't drink!
2. I did not drink for several weeks prior to the race in order to keep my system clean
3. No change...don't drink anyways.
4. My social life was unaffected until about 1.5 months before the race, at which point I stopped drinking and only went out a few nights a week (and made sure to get enough sleep). I found out I kind of liked it though - it was sort of nice and my health was exponentially better.
5. In the weeks before the marathon I didn't drink at all when I went out. I partied just as much but without drinking because there is nothing like trying to run more than 5 miles with a gut full of beer. I would imagine that if I had big training runs all through the year I probably would not have drank at all this year. That said, I don't really drink very much as it is but the need to run a lot definitely motivates one to drink less.
6. Not significantly, though that isn't an important part of my weekly routine anyway. I would say that, toward the end, I definitely eschewed even opportunities for moderate drinking in favor of a good sober night's sleep in advance of a big run.
7. I consumed pretty much no alcohol whatsoever, and my partying was extremely limited due to weekend long runs.
8. Not at all.
9. I definitely drank a lot less last semester, and completely stopped drinking alcohol since January in preparations for the marathon. I still had a good social life and partied (and saw a few HCMC members at parties).
10. During my training I limited myself to the occasional light beer or other drink (my favorite being Mike's Light Hard Lemonade, great at about 75 calories). This did not prevent me from hanging out with my friends.
11. After some of my long runs I was too tired to go out, and then the weekend before I made sure to not drink and went to bed very early, but overall it didn't really affect my drinking or partying.
12. Well, this isn't really my kind of social scene anyway, so I can't really speak to this. I'd say the major effect on my social life was sacrificing one night a weekend to go to bed early so that I could wake up early and take my long run.
13. It didn't affect it that much. I drink pretty moderately in general. If I knew I was going to do a long run the next day, I would be sure not to drink much at all and get to bed early. Once in a while if I was really having a lot of fun being out with friends, I would just do that and reschedule my long run for the next day.
14. It didn't.
15. Not applicable.
16. I would have to limit myself and come home a little earlier on nights before long runs, but otherwise not really.
17. I partied very hard two days before, and slept four and a half hours the night before the marathon, so i'd say i haven't missed a beat
18. A lot. I didn't drink at all basically second semester, and I didn't party for the entire month of April except for my roommates 21st birthdays, which I couldn't even drink at. Its a legitimate concern junior year cause I really wished I had done it sophomore year.
19. Not really at all.
20. I did not affect my partying or drinking one way or another.
21. Not at all.
22. Training definitely makes you more aware of your drinking – and there's no way you can drink before a long run. I also didn't drink for two weeks before the marathon - you are much more conscious of how much you go out because you need more sleep
23. Not being a huge party animal to begin with, I'm not sure my participation made a huge difference in these habits.
24. I definitely took it easy in the weeks leading up to the marathon, but it did not affect my partying other than that.
25. I stopped drinking the month before the marathon and started to go to bed early, but besides that it had no effect. I went out that month actually and just had a great time without alcohol and felt much better the morning after. I might even drink less in the future because I realize I can go wild and let loose--don't need alcohol to do that.
26. Not very much. I stayed in on 2 or 3 Friday nights for Saturday training runs and stopped drinking for the two weeks before the marathon, but other than that my habits remained largely the same. I drink as much as anyone else who likes to go out, and it didn't really affect my training much.

8. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect you *otherwise* (eating, sleeping, daily routine, social relationships, general thinking, etc.– whatever)?

1. I slept more going up to the marathon. And now I feel I have been thinking more positively.
2. I watched my diet more closely, my daily routine was more structured and efficient, I am more confident, unafraid to approach new challenges
3. I cared more about sleeping because i knew i couldn't run exhausted. I also was more conscious of the TYPE of food I ate.
4. I ate better, it gave me priorities, and it was kind of nice to have an excuse out of pointless drinking or partying.
5. no effect, i tried to eat a little better the last week
6. 1. Structure - the marathon served as a starting point for consideration of all of the above. 2. Content - I certainly paid more attention to what I was putting into my body and how it affected my performance. To this end, I would highly recommend keeping a runner's log for future HCMC runners. It can help both in performance (and diagnosing contributing factors to problems therewith) and in "general thinking," as it forced some reflection, even if seemingly menial in detail, on an otherwise quite often unreflective, work-driven student environment.
7. It's a good excuse to eat 10 cookies a day and not feel guilty. It forced me to get at least 6 hours of sleep a night. Made great new friends and running buddies! (very important)
8. HCMC improved my eating and sleeping habits and added some structure to my daily routine.
9. Eating was good; I was very hungry when I was running. Sleeping was also good, but I slept slightly less in order to wake up early to run. My social life was fine, and I had a cool conversation starter.
10. As I joined HCMC eleven days before the start of the race, I can only say that HCMC has given me more energy to complete my tasks.
11. Whenever possible I was really conscious of how much I was sleeping - before work got overwhelming I made sure to go to bed a lot earlier. I've always tried to exercise regularly, but this held me accountable to that and forced me to wake up before class to exercise (which was different than in the past, when I had just tried to fit in runs whenever possible). And at times the thought of the marathon added extra stress, especially when I was unsure if I'd actually be able to run it/was in a fair amount of pain from injuries.
12. It was really great for my eating schedule. I knew that I had to be really regular and healthy about what I was eating and when to make sure that my body was properly nutritioned and prepared to both run and recover every day. I also love that being in HCMC adds a new dimension to my social sphere both because of the wonderful people that I met but also because of the new and developing aspect of my life (my training and fundraising) that I could share with other people.
13. I was definitely more conscious about eating better foods, especially near race day. Having to get to bed early was sometimes a problem for hanging out with people, because I would go home to sleep at midnight, which is considered insanely early. But I tried to keep a balance - sometimes I would just stay up late and then run in the afternoon the next day. I don't think it harmed my relationships overall.
14. It didn't.
15. Training is tiring, but I find I have more energy when I run.
16. My daily routine had to include at least an hour of running, which often would come at 11 or 12 at night, which in turn wreaked havoc on my sleep schedule. But once I figured out what worked, it was fine.
17. i just really sore, nothing more. just temporary
18. I ate a LOT. I basically didn't lose any weight during my training because I just ate everything. I ate healthier no doubt, but its going to be a struggle to keep from gaining weight now. My sleeping schedule was somewhat thrown off, I got a lot less sleep but that was probably due to schoolwork. I made a LOT of friends through the marathon, but I probably missed out on some good social events by participating in the marathon. However, I would definitely do it again just because of how it makes you feel personally.
19. Not really at all. (But I joined late.)
20. I had been running regularly but had not planned on running Boston. The quick open slot did not allow me to change my sleeping, eating, and work-out habits substantially enough to make a difference.

8. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect you *otherwise* (eating, sleeping, daily routine, social relationships, general thinking. etc.– whatever)?

21. Running has been part of my life since freshman year of high school. No real difference even though I loved HCMC.
22. It makes you more aware of your sleeping and eating habits - I developed much better habits
23. I definitely felt more healthy in general due to my participation. I had an easier time sleeping and ate more (in a good way) when I was running more.
24. I loved meeting the people in HCMC, and I definitely feel much healthier having trained for the marathon.
25. made me wake up earlier, allowed me to eat more, be happier--though occasionally waking up earlier made me more tired and grouchier. on the whole, however, it was a largely positive influence on me.
26. I ate whatever I wanted, but focused a good amount on carbs. My sleeping habits did not change much. Not much changed. It was very manageable and enjoyable.

11. What was the *best* part of your HCMC experience, and what made it so great?

1. Running the last mile of the race, because it was really difficult but soo exciting and inspiring.
2. Running the race
3. The other runners! The group experience was the BEST.
4. Race day was far and away the best part of the HCMC experience. I had never run with that many people before, and the crowd and everything else that went into the day were mind-blowingly awesome. [Name redacted] probably got sick of hearing me say this when I was running with him, but it was incredible and like nothing I had ever seen before.
5. Definitely Marathon Day. I didn't really do that much else with HCMC because I got the spot so late but the day itself was really exciting. I was doing my first marathon, and it was really exciting to see what would happen.
6. The opportunity to hang out, run, and share ideas with such a great community of people. The fact that I was a relative outsider (to the core group) as a result of my special status didn't detract from this - rather, it seemed to add to it, as it forced me into a role that was new for me and led me to reflections I would never otherwise have been forced to make.
7. Long training runs with [name redacted]. We were both freshmen running at almost the same pace. Had some of the best long runs with him, and we pushed each other. It just felt great.
8. Marathon day! Finishing the marathon was an incredibly satisfying experience, especially since I ran conservatively. All I had to do was cash in on all the work I had been doing and go along for the ride.
9. Community. It was fun having people to run with who did not make me feel stressed about performing at a certain level. I was worried everyone would be doing 18 mile runs at an 8mm pace from the get-go. Everyone I know on HCMC is pretty awesome (and crazy about running), and I made a bunch of new friends.
10. Finishing. It is an incredible feeling knowing that your body has such strength and potential.
11. THE PEOPLE!!! So inspirational, especially as we got closer to the actual date of the marathon, we started eating dinners together, which were a great way to debrief/de-stress.
12. Oh, this question is impossible. There were many events that made HCMC so meaningful for me. Among them were all the group dinners we had, whether official or not and the community built over the listserv. There are certain personality traits shared by marathoners, and to find an entire community of people who share the dedication, hearty spirit, loyalty, and deep enthusiasm of marathoners is really special. I was particularly touched by the get-together we had to honor John Edwards. John was a friend of mine, and it was very moving to celebrate him so respectfully with a group of people, most of whom had never even met him. This just reinforced to me the admirable and inspiring humanity of our community. I have felt particularly supported by the group this year and will always be grateful for that experience.
13. Race day!! It was AMAZING!!! I can't say enough how awesome it was to actually run the Boston freaking Marathon. It's really an incredible thing to do. I'm still euphoric today, even being sore.
14. Getting to know folks and having training partners to push me.
15. The support and excitement from my daughters was the best experience.
16. Have a group of people to run the marathon with and then to re-hash it with afterwards. I was thinking about it afterwards and running a marathon by yourself must be horrible! Plus, I think that my blockmates appreciated me having other people to talk to about the marathon because they were probably getting pretty sick of hearing about it.
17. the best part was finishing the marathon, and i love that it all came about so spontaneously as a challenge. i love that very much
18. Finishing the boston marathon. It just makes you so much more aware of how amazing this experience has been, and how the friends you have made and the experience you've had is so worth it.
19. Running the marathon.
20. Marathon day. Everyone is just SO excited to be part of this historic and very personal event.

11. What was the *best* part of your HCMC experience, and what made it so great?

21. The marathon obviously. Also, meeting guys like [name redacted] who like to run as much as I do and pushes me through the long training runs.
22. The great network of support in training
23. Running the marathon!!!! It was an unforgettable experience, and running with two other HCMC runners really allowed me to enjoy the run, while bonding with a couple other students.
24. Meeting all of the people. It was great because everyone was so nice and into running!
25. Running with people: running the marathon with everyone and running long runs with friends. having the opportunity and the means (the listserv) of organizing and running long runs with others made them bearable and really a lot of fun. It culminated in running the marathon with [names redacted]; they got me through heartbreak hill and really helped to carry me through the entire 'thon. So, essentially, it was the camaraderie that was my favorite part, from running down to the expo with [names redacted] to just having [name redacted] agree to come along on a long run and make it bearable. It was the most wonderful part.
26. Running the marathon, especially since I was with other HCMC participants. For the reasons that I mentioned above, running with people was SO MUCH BETTER than running alone. They gave me the motivation that I needed.

12. What was the *worst* part of your HCMC experience, why was it so bad, and how could it have been better?

1. I wish I knew more people in the group.
2. There really wasn't any aspect of the challenge that I didn't like - even the pain and soreness experienced after the race seemed good
3. I didn't go on as many group runs as I should have.
4. I injured my knee in January, forcing me to limit my runs to once a week. It really sucked, limited my speed and ability to run a good time, and is causing a lot of pain right now. I don't really know how I could have avoided it though. Maybe stretched more?
5. There wasn't really anything that bad. Maybe miles 22-26 of the race but it is a marathon after all which is not designed to be a super comfortable endeavor all the way through.
6. Nothing.
7. Last 10k of the marathon I dropped from 7:15 miles to 22:00 minute miles. My legs froze up, and I really couldn't move despite the fact that I was not tired. I should have drank more gatorade and consumed more electrolytes during the race. That was a huge mistake. Other part was fundraising, since my friends are generally not very wealthy, and I didn't have many connections. It was difficult for me to raise money.
8. Missing the dessert after party! Also being injured was pretty bad. Not much could be done about either of those things though.
9. Injuries. I hate getting and being injured, AAHHHH! With my tendon tear, I was in this yucky boot and had to use crutches for a while, and it made life quite miserable. I had to drop out of the marathon, which was really disheartening. It put a damper on my I really wish I had been able to plan my training better, because I am quite sure that's why I got injured. I overdid some things that I shouldn't have. I think HCMC needs to hire/request professional training advice for the marathoners, to plan out a personalized training schedule, especially since so many runners have not run a marathon before. We have great resources on every other front, but I felt clueless
10. The 11 day training period. Though I had been running recreationally prior to this period, I would have liked more guidance from HCMC staff on how to approach the race. Perhaps next year HCMC staff can convene a special meeting for those who sign up late. At the meeting they can discuss the various ups and downs and strategies for finishing well on race day. The staff, through discussion of past training, would also be able to weed out or re-direct people who really do not seem physically capable of finishing the race and who might injure themselves in the process. That said, all of the late signers-up seem to have finished well and uninjured, which was great!
11. The four months that I had to take off because of a stress fracture - there's not much that HCMC could have done, I was just unwise in my initial training and then suffered during the actual marathon.
12. Miles 15-18. I thought my legs were going to collapse, and I didn't have a running partner. More broadly, however, I think that I least enjoyed getting stood up by people who said that they would meet me for runs. I particularly posted for company on my long runs and was disappointed by people who flaked out.
13. Getting a minor injury in the week before the race. I was really worried that it would be a problem during the marathon and that I wouldn't be able to finish after all that training. Luckily it stopped hurting around mile 3 and wasn't a problem the rest of the race.
14. Easily, the worst part was giving up my spot because of an injury.
15. The policy of charging the credit card even if the pledge is exceeded is unusual as far as I know. I've checked with a number of other charities that participate in the marathon. Usually, the organizers take the credit card number and charge the runner the difference between what they raise and the minimum required for getting a number through the charity. This almost ruined the experience for me, but I forced myself to let it go. The vehemence of the response to my concerns seemed a bit legalistic and not very friendly. It seemed that there could have been a better way to solve the matter rather than discourage a donor who might have tried to raise even more money.

12. What was the *worst* part of your HCMC experience, why was it so bad, and how could it have been better?

16. Because I joined late, I wasn't able to get a singlet from this year
17. i didn't know anyone and didn't feel a part of the group. i met them the day for the marathon
18. Probably the shin splints I got midway through. It made me question whether I could have run the marathon. I just wish we had had more communication on what are common injuries so I didn't get so stressed about it.
19. I guess I am a little uncomfortable with the fundraising model; it somehow seems weird to me to be asking my friend and peers (some of whom don't have all that much money) to give to a certain specific charity that I/they may/may not particularly support so that I can run a marathon. I just think it's a strange dynamic. I also felt like there was a slightly overly righteous attitude towards the fund-raising aspect that really came out at the after-party. Instead of fancy deserts and chair massages, couldn't we just have had soft drinks or something cheap that everyone who came could have partaken in without being told, "No, these are actually only for the people who raised thousands of dollars for charity." It made me uncomfortable being there, and I had raised money. I'm not saying that raising money for charity isn't a noble cause, but I also think that there is something laudable in just the act of running a marathon in terms of the discipline, athleticism, realization of self/human potential, etc., and so I don't think the accomplishment of other runners who perhaps didn't raise money for charity should be diminished.
20. N/A
21. Cramping at mile 20. I made up my mind not to quit before the marathon, but at mile 23, I seriously thought I couldn't run another step. Next time, more electrolytes during and before the race, I didn't eat bananas or drink gatorade.
22. didn't have one
23. Posting runs to the list. I didn't get a lot of replies early in the year, so I sort of gave up on it.
24. I did not finish the race because I got heat stroke and dehydration and passed out. I should have been better at hydrating in the days before the marathon, especially because it was a hot day.
25. nothing....
26. Running in the winter was awful sometimes. I did my 20 miler in the rain and snow, alone, and it was not very fun. I had to stop and turn back on a couple runs because it was too cold. Also, injuries aren't fun either. I had knee problems (which luckily went away) and a shin problem. Resting and cross-training is very nerve-racking because you're scared that your injury will keep you from running the marathon.

13. In retrospect, what (if anything) could/would/should you have done differently to improve your HCMC experience?

1. I would have started running sooner with the group.
2. I would have trained earlier and watched my diet more closely
3. Went on more group runs.
4. Gone on more posted runs.
5. I would have trained throughout the year even without a slot. I didn't know that it was so easy to run bandit. I thought about running the marathon in the fall but then dropped off a bit. I ran enough to stay in shape but I wasn't really improving too much.
6. I wish I would've been more dedicated in my training this spring - the thesis intervened - and that I would've taken better advantage of the 'broader HCMC community,' many of whom run paces more similar to mine and might've made valuable training partners.
7. Those last moments before the race. I should have drank more than just a few sips of gatorade. I should have taken the first half a little bit slower. Besides the marathon, everything else was great.
8. Skipped class to go to the dessert after party.
9. Shoulds: I should have done more swimming/aqua-jogging to keep up my fitness and muscles while not running. I should have planned my training schedule better. Woulds: Run consistently in the summer to get my legs used to the weekly mileage. Coulds: Planned my fundraising a bit better, and not get injured?
10. I cannot think of anything I would have done differently. Of course, I wish I had received a slot in September when I originally applied so that I would have had more training time.
11. I would have started off better - I got injured pretty early on and that really threw off my training schedule, so I wish I had started off smarter and built more slowly - only 10% increase in mileage each week next time!
12. As always, I wish I had been more invested in training with other people. As much as I love my solo training, I also grew to appreciate group runs this year. I also wish that I had dedicated myself to train with someone who was faster/better than me so that I could have made a more dramatic improvement in my fitness. I get scared to run with people who are faster than me because I don't want to slow them down or have to drop back, but I wish I had just bit the bullet more frequently on that front.
13. I would have trained better. I ran the race without any problems, but I still think I should have done more hill workouts and a few more long runs. I think if I had done that I would have felt less nervous in the weeks before the race. I also should probably have run the course before the race, although I liked that I didn't have any idea what the race was going to be like before I ran it. It made it into an adventure, and I think may have made the time pass more quickly. Still, it might have been better psychologically to know what I was going to be facing on race day.
14. I would buy new shoes earlier!! and also maybe try to get into more of a regular schedule with other runners to have company on more runs.
15. Meet personally with [name redacted] ahead of time.
16. I would have joined earlier!
17. i really don't know much about how it feels to be apart of hcmc. like i said before, i took on this challenge 10 days before and ran once in between that time frame.
18. Tried to interact more with marathoners. I didn't go on runs with others for the first semester, which was really dumb of me because 1. I had a lot more fun when I did, and 2. I ran faster and had less pain afterwards.
19. Not sure.
20. I wish I had taken advantage of running with more students
21. I would have persuaded/forced some of my friends who are avid runners to join HCMC so we can build a genuine community, perhaps do more racing.
22. I probably should have attended more of the social things
23. I was really bad about posting to the list. I posted a few runs early in the year, but no one came to them, and so I think I gave up on HCMC as a way of finding training partners. I wish I'd made more of an effort to get to know other runners. They all are really cool!
24. (see above) [response to question #12]
25. started serious running training later and maintained a more balanced athletic ...i overtrained early on and got sick of all the monotonous running. I would also have gone on more runs with other people and posted to the list more. That would have made my experience better.
26. Ummm...I wish I stuck to my schedule more? My experience was great, so I'm not complaining.

14. In the future, what can HCMC do to improve?

1. Possibly have more group get togethers, because runners of different paces don't get to meet up that often.
2. Sign late people up more early - I suppose this means asking midway into the program for realistic commitments from the athletes - some runners only joined the team one or two weeks in advance of the race, which is a little too close
3. nothing
4. Get more spots so the awesomeness gets spread around to even MORE people!
5. I honestly can't think of anything that is wrong with HCMC right now. I mean it would be awesome to know about the slots earlier but there is nothing you can do about that.
6. If it were POSSIBLE, and related to the last point of the previous comment, I think some more structured way of involving unofficial members of the HCMC listserv in setting up pace groups for those of similar abilities might be an extramural benefit to the standard HCMC experience.
7. Perhaps have organized practice times? It's a stretch, though. I think we should get to know everyone better before the marathon. I feel like I knew only a couple HCMC runners before race day.
8. I'd like to see HCMC have a little more structure or organized gatherings of the participants. Maybe optional weekly meals or something.
9. I think the single most important thing HCMC needs to do is get professional training/running advice, at least for those people who acknowledge they are novice runners (like me). It may be expensive, but considering we raise funds for two important charities (they may give a discount) and that injuries reduce the money raise, it will be ultimately worthwhile.
10. Special meetings for those who sign up late.
11. Although it was an incredible community, I wish that we had been better about getting together for marathon-dinners and other more social events earlier in the year, not just in the month or two before the actual marathon - so perhaps organize a few more events for everyone?
12. It's really important to continue the marked improvements on the listserv community. Mandatory posting, although it wasn't followed to a T, was a major improvement. I also wish that we had more organized events. I understand that the idea is for people to take the initiative upon themselves to organize such things, so I guess I would encourage you to encourage participants to organize more gatherings.
13. I think more community-building events would be great.
14. Keep it up with the Thursday dinners; maybe even do a Thursday morning run like Tufts' Wednesday runs.
15. They did a great job.
16. I was happy overall, but I suggest that HCMC keep having the bus to the starting line, which really saved a lot of trouble on race day.
17. ? just keep up the great work
18. Maybe make the listserv in digest mode or compress the # of emails.
19. Not sure.
20. Harvard University needs to embrace and support this program more. Tufts University has it in the right place as far as priorities go.
21. I think we can organize to do more races, have mini practices, get more guys who ran hardcore in HS but don't really know what to do now. There are plenty of guys out there who love running but can't get themselves motivated because they aren't part of HCMC.
22. not much :)
23. I know this goes against your general philosophy, but I think scheduling a few MANDATORY long runs, or maybe a few required meals might have been an effective way to help people get to know each other.
24. I don't think HCMC needs to change at all...it was such a great experience!
25. More meetings! I know it sounds ridiculous, but every meeting we had was so much fun. Just to spend that time connecting with the other runners was great. This can be done simply by encouraging veteran runners to take up this responsibility or just at the beginning of the program, declaring a certain time and day and dining hall for HCMC dinners. I just think that more meetings can only help foster the sense of community that made HCMC so special to me
26. I have no complaints.

15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for PBHA and Project HEALTH, and (iii) building a running community. Hearing this, what (if anything) comes to mind in light of your own HCMC experience this past year?

1. HCMC has really made me want to directly help out with PBHA.
2. I believe HCMC has fulfilled all of its goals
3. awesome people. awesome goal. awesome feat!
4. That pretty much covers it!
5. I think we accomplished all three of those goals.
6. My dedication to (i) was probably unaffected by my HCMC-affiliation - though I recognize that for the others this is the ultimate deal-breaker. (ii) was more important, as it was a major incentive for my involvement (I wanted something more from the marathon experience). To that end, (iii) too was quite important - perhaps the most so - and I would like to see both the HCMC and the nebulous ARC running communities expanded or otherwise rendered more vigorous and accessible to the unofficial HCMC runners as a collective.
7. Building a running community. Whether or not you're training for a marathon, the HCMC, especially the listserv, is the way to go. I wouldn't have met my training partners had I not done it.
8. The first and third options were well fulfilled by HCMC. I'd like to know more about the PBHA and Project HEALTH projects that my raised money will go to. It might also be nice for participants to be able to earmark some of their funds for a particular organization they participate in. For example, I do the Mission Hill After School Program and would love it if the money I raised went directly to them. That may not be feasible though.
9. Although I did not run the Boston Marathon, this is the biggest part of HCMC. The marathon-list, which I think exists distinctly, forms the running community. Fundraising was rewarding, but as I mentioned several times earlier, it was a little challenging initially.
10. I felt part of a running community when, on race day, I felt alone and out of gas at the 12 Mile marker. Thoughts of not finishing -- which I had managed to suppress -- crept into my mind. I had run the first half of the race with a friend from New York, but he had run ahead. It was then that I noticed a fellow HCMC runner and yelled "Hey, Harvard!" We pushed each other through Wellesley, up Heartbreak Hill, and all the way through the last half of the race.
11. I think all three were accomplished - my training even inspired a lot of non-HCMCers to start running more regularly, so I was able to connect with an even broader community. It was great.
12. Check. Check. And check. I feel deeply satisfied with my having achieved these three goals. I also appreciate that any personal goals set beyond these are entirely supported and motivated by the entire HCMC community. I have gained so much confidence, experience, and friendship over the past two years in HCMC, and I really admire everyone's commitment to these goals. I don't remember if a question like this is on the application, but I think it's important to have prospective applicants reflect on these goals and their commitment to them. HCMC is not just about running a marathon, and I think that once people recognize that, the community is deeply strengthened.
13. I think it accomplished all three!
14. Due to injury, I was mostly a part of (iii), and it was spectacular.
15. I was not really part of the student group, but I enjoyed reading all the comments on the listserv.
16. I think that all three of these goals were achieved. I was able to raise a fair amount of money for these organizations, I definitely have some new friends, and I completed the Boston Marathon!
17. everyone seems nice on the day of the event. i cant comment on the other two questions
18. I should have done better in integrating into the running community. I also feel like I did it for a lot of personal reasons, but only now am I really appreciating the fundraising for charity aspect of it.

15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for PBHA and Project HEALTH, and (iii) building a running community. Hearing this, what (if anything) comes to mind in light of your own HCMC experience this past year?

19. I guess I think that for me running is basically a solitary activity, so I'm not sure that I'm a totally good fit for HCMC in light of (i) and (iii), although it is nice to have contact with other people who into the marathon experience.
20. Project Health and PBHA do so many good things for the community and Harvard. I am happy to be even a small part of that contribution.
21. HCMC does a good job of all three, but I feel we can build a much larger running community.
22. For me, I was looking to fulfill the first two stated goals - and HCMC was a great organization to help me do that
23. I think that as an HCMC member I successfully managed parts (i) and (ii) but not so much (iii). If I were to participate with HCMC in the future, I think I'd want to work on that aspect of my experience.
24. I think all of these things were achieved in my HCMC experience.
25. It definitely accomplished it's aim. As this questionnaire attests to, I definitely felt a sense of community. and it trained me for the BM very well. and we managed to raise money for PBHA and PROJECT HEALTH too which was great. so it was awesome!
26. 1. My training went well. All questions that I had were more or less answered over the listserv. 2. Fundraising was made easier by the website, but it was otherwise what I expected. 3. Toward the beginning, I didn't think we would end up with much of a community. By the end, however, we had a great group of runners that got a few dinners together, ran together, and celebrated together after the marathon.

16. Please comment on the listserv (e.g., whether being required to post 2 runs/week was useful, why you did or didn't feel comfortable posting to the listserv, how the listserv was most or least useful to you, etc.)

1. I think the listserv is funny and inspiring.
2. It was very useful
3. Some weeks it was hard, especially because I was more spontaneous with what time I wanted to go for a run, but it was also good incentive to get out there for sure.
4. The 2 runs/week rule wasn't really that useful to me (and I don't think that many people followed it). I was only running once a week anyways, and most other people didn't like to run in the afternoon. That being said, it was very helpful to see where other people were at in their training schedules (inferred from their posted runs), and the list had a veritable wealth of information about injuries, training, food, etc.
5. I really like the listserv. A lot of emails, especially if your not in digest mode, but I think it is worth it on balance.
6. Run-posting is useful, though I think many tend to set up rhythms over time that made the posts more of a formality than a substantive/effectual means of bringing people together (particularly given widely disparate pacing). That being said, I wouldn't do away with it. As I've said above, involving non-participants somehow (incentives? I don't know) might vibe that part of the list in a more meaningful way.
7. Listserv is amazing. It's a great way for runners to meet up. However, once I had a few training partners, I ended up not posting onto the listserv and just contact my partners directly. In general I feel it's a great place to get everyone on the same page. It's crucial to HCMC.
8. The listserv was great. I didn't always find company for runs when I wanted it or go out to join others when I should have but just reading about other people training provided excellent motivation. Plus, committing to doing a run or workout on the list forces you to follow through.
9. I posted a lot less than I expected, mainly because I was injured, and I'm glad you were not "an ogre." It caused me a bit of stress the weeks I did not run much, but I think it's a great thing for the community. I secretly hope to be as witty or creative as some of the other posters.
10. Did not use this.
11. I think 2 runs/week was too much, especially in the beginning when everyone was really eager to post as much as possible. Perhaps just 1 run/week would make more sense, especially as the posts dwindled to things like 'going to the gym,' which generally weren't that useful.
12. I struggle with the listserv. On the one hand, it's very difficult because I often run when I finish my homework, which can be at an indeterminate time. It's hard to know exactly when I'll run. I also struggle with how I'm going to feel on a certain day and thus predicting my pace or distance. I really admire the listserv as an HCMC institution, and I have gained a lot from it this year. The group runs that I posted/participated in were really great, for the most part, and I am so glad that I learned from my experience last year and actually partook in the listserv goodness. I liked that we were encouraged to post 2 runs a week. Even if we didn't stick to that, I at least felt that I was always conscious of the listserv. It really fosters a sense of leadership in the community if HCMC runners are required to take a hand in motivating and organizing the listserv.
13. I liked having the list, especially for long-runs or hill workouts. Being required to post twice a week is good for keeping the volume on the list high, but it was somewhat inconvenient for me. I run almost every day with a good friend of mine, and so I didn't want to post those runs because they're our time to hang out and share stories. I would post runs on the days that she couldn't run, but that wasn't always twice a week. So overall I think it's a good policy, but there should be other ways of encouraging involvement in the community that could count as well. For instance, organizing a dinner of all the participants could count as a "run," or a marathon-related movie screening (we talked about that at one point). I think that would build community and therefore make people more likely to run with each other, even though it's an indirect way of doing it.
14. I liked that, particular as there was some flexibility with posting 2 runs with regard to traveling, getting injured.

16. Please comment on the listserv (e.g., whether being required to post 2 runs/week was useful, why you did or didn't feel comfortable posting to the listserv, how the listserv was most or least useful to you, etc.)

15. I didn't post, but I enjoyed it.
16. I was a little hesitant to post my runs to the listserv because I was unsure about running with people I didn't know. I guess the point is to meet other runners, but I still didn't really like it. Also, a lot of times, my runs would be whenever I could find an hour or two in my day to fit it in, so I wouldn't have time to post and see if others would join me.
17. i join 10 days before the marathon
18. The two runs a week wasn't too useful mostly because I didn't do it towards the end. I was comfortable towards the end of the year posting on the listserv, but it did feel like it was somewhat dominated by people who were familiar with running and not those who needed help. I also wish I had gotten less emails :)
19. I joined late, but I felt comfortable posting to the listserv. Had I joined earlier, I'm not sure how I would have felt about posting 2 runs/week. I usually don't plan ahead very well.
20. Posting and following up on runs is a VERY important part of the overall experience.
21. Listserv is great, and I will use it much more in the future, I was afraid to post because I knew not many people run my pace for training runs so posting wasn't too useful.
22. I thought the advice on the listserv was great. I tend to like running by myself, and so didn't post or go on many runs, and the list was helpful
23. At the beginning of the year, I posted runs to the listserv, but often the times I was running or pace I was running at didn't work for other people. In the end, I found it easier to just coordinate runs with friends who were also training for the marathon, and bypass the listserv altogether. Maybe if my initial postings had been more successful, I would have been better about continuing to post.
24. I liked having the requirement, and it was great to see that other people were out there running. I got sort of lazy at the end and stopped posting as much, but I wish I had not because running with people was awesome!
25. the listserv was great in that it allowed me to coordinate long runs..
26. I didn't mind the requirement, but it's really hard to plan in advance when you will be running. I usually ended up just running at the point in the day when I thought I had an hour to spare. I usually couldn't tell you a day in advance (or even a few hours in advance) at exactly what time I would be heading out. However, the listserv was extremely useful when I had questions about injuries, training, diet, or anything else I wasn't sure about. I would send out an e-mail and get a bunch of replies within 24 hours.

17. Please share any comments you have about the specific deals that various businesses offered us (e.g., the New Balance discount, the fruit shakes at b.good.).

1. I didn't find out about the shakes until it was too late :(
2. N/A
3. fruit shakes = amazing
4. The smoothies at B. Good are the hands-down best perk of HCMC (other than the marathon itself, of course). After a long run, NOTHING tastes better. I don't know what I'm going to do now that I can't end my runs at B. Good.
5. AWESOME!
6. b. good was great - are they done now :(I didn't take advantage of any others.
7. Fruit shakes at b.good were amazing. I didn't use the New Balance discounts, since the outlet was quite far away. However, I do regret not doing so because I could have used a new pair of shorts and such.
8. The free fruit shakes were one of the best things about the past semester.
9. The NB discount was awesome. I should have used the other perks more, like going to Marathon Sports. I didn't get a shake from b.good--I wonder if I still can get one.
10. Did not use these.
11. The fruit shakes at b.good were the best thing that has ever happened to me - I'm so sad that's over! The discount at Marathon Sports was also pretty helpful.
12. B. good smoothies are the ULTIMATE post-run treat. I was always so grateful for that after my long runs. Also, the Marathon Sports deal was really great. I didn't take advantage of anything else.
13. I didn't use them. That was a mistake.
14. The Marathon Sports card was the best. B. Good comes in a close second.
15. N.A.
16. Because I joined late, I only really used the deal at b.good. I didn't even know there was one with New Balance, but I don't wear their shoes anyway. I did enjoy the shakes, though, the couple time that I went post-runs.
17. i didn't use them but it bet its wonderful.
18. AMAZING I used the b.good shake thing at least 10 times, and it was so refreshing after a long run. The new balance and marathon sports deals also really came in handy come time to buy new shoes/gels/anything.
19. N/A
20. N/A
21. I won free shoes at a race HCMC organized. End of story
22. didn't take advantage of any
23. The fruit shakes were AMAZING after a long hard run. No better way to unwind than with a b.good strawberry banana smoothie.
24. The b-good shakes are the best part of HCMC!!
25. i only took advantage of the shakes at b.good during the last three weeks but it was a definite help in getting me through my final long runs when I really just wanted to stop running. definitely helpful
26. I got my shoes, a jacket, and pants with the Marathon Sports discount and probably saved about \$40. And the shakes from b.good were DELICIOUS. It was amazing to have one immediately after a run. I would recommend a blend of vanilla milkshake and raspberry.

18. What brief advice or words of wisdom would you give to potential HCMC participants?

1. Run and have fun, don't put pressure on yourself.
2. Don't give up - it's worth it.
3. Don't let fear stop you! I'm the last person who thought they could run a marathon. Don't let fear of being too slow or not good enough stop you. That one day made everything else ...good or bad...worth it.
4. Listen to [name redacted], he knows all. Especially the parts about not running for time.
5. Trust your own knowledge about your body and what you think it can do. Because I haven't been super gung ho about running in college, a lot of people were really surprised when I signed up two weeks before hand and I got a lot of pretty skeptical questions (Have you ever run more than 5 miles? Can you finish?) and after I finished (with a decent time, no less) most people back at school were shocked to hear that I actually completed the race. I almost didn't do it because of the skepticism was making me doubt myself a bit but it was important to remember that while you know your friends at college well, they don't know how much you ran over the summer or in high school or even if you're stealing away from your dorm late at night to get a jog in after you do your reading. So I would trust your body and your own knowledge of it more than your friends careless predictions. Also, you will get tons of tips from people who have run marathons or know someone who has, and you should take it all with a grain of salt. Not everyone knows what they're talking about and not everything is a good idea or everybody. Listen, but don't feel obligated to follow every piece of advice (including my own right here!).
6. Take this (especially if it's your first marathon) slowly and with humility. Reach out to as many members of the running community as possible.
7. Whether you are a seasoned veteran of running or a first time runner, you will fit in in HCMC.
8. Provided you train well and run smart, marathon day could be the most fun you have all year.
9. DO IT. You won't regret it, even if you don't get to run. (I got a lot fitter this year, and I paid about the price of a gym membership with my registration fee.)
10. (1) Don't bring an ipod. It really doesn't help, and you don't want that thing in your pocket. (2) Find a running buddy. Find someone to run the first half of the race with. If you lose your running buddy, there will be hundreds of runners around you -- just pick one of them! For the first half I ran with a friend from New York (who was running unofficially) and the second half I ran with an HCMC runner. Really try to run at least part of the race (even if it's a small part) with someone from HCMC! Find someone who shares your goals! (3) If it's sunny or might get sunny, slap on the sunscreen -- my friend and I got pretty badly sunburn on a semi-sunny day. (4) Don't be afraid to abandon clothing on the course, and, relatedly, wear clothing you don't mind losing. I wore one of my favorite shirts under my HCMC jersey during the race; I became so overheated at Mile 17/18 that I had to throw away that undershirt and not look back. I don't regret it at all -- I sure wasn't going to carry that thing! (5) Practice hydrating yourself with Gatorade/H2O and energizing yourself with Gu/energy gels during your long practice runs. This is a very important part of the race -- don't underestimate it!! (6) Check your running shoes with City Sports during your training period -- they are very very knowledgeable when it comes to running shoes and can save you from injury. My foot was hurting during training so I went there on a whim -- it turns out that the shoes I was wearing, Nike FREES, were HORRIBLE shoes to wear for more than a 1-2 mile run. I could have seriously injured myself running the marathon in those things! No wonder my foot had been hurting! (7) Don't buy Nike FREES. Instead, splurge on a good, stable running shoe (especially if you have flat feet!) -- see the STABILITY SECTION at CitySports (No I don't work for CitySports, they just helped me a great deal!!)
11. It's an incredible experience, but definitely time consuming - know what you're getting yourself into and be ready to commit a lot of time and energy into something that is so worth it in the end.
12. Be entirely open to this experience. It will profoundly change your appreciation of yourself and your body. Take on, with great enthusiasm, the wonderful opportunity you have been granted to be part of a vibrant and supportive community that will help carry you all the way from day one of training to the Finish Line on Boylston Street. Understand that this is a unique experience in that it is profoundly personal and self-motivated but also so interconnected with a sense of community and group strength. Enjoy your training, as that's the real accomplishment, and revel in the beauty of Marathon Monday!

18. What brief advice or words of wisdom would you give to potential HCMC participants?

13. Make sure you get in a good number of long runs. I was a little bit negligent about that - my longest run was 17 miles. Race day was totally fine, but I think I would have run faster if I had run 20 or more miles before. Also, DO IT!! It's an amazing experience. All those hours of training are fundraising are SO WORTH IT for the chance to participate in the Boston Marathon!!!
14. Best thing ever! I recommend it hands down.
15. Keep up the great work.
16. The main thing that you need to run a marathon is not athletic ability or speed or even to be in good physical shape. You just need to be able to set aside a little bit of time from your week and to be DETERMINED.
17. enjoy the experience, before you know it... its over
18. DO IT!!!! Even if you've never run before, if you feel like you can participate and have the desire to, you have to do this. Running the marathon is the most self-fulfilling experience you will ever have done in your life (unless you've already cured cancer or something), and just the community you integrate yourself into will make you feel so good about yourself. I'm still in shock and on a runners high!
19. I think this is a really awesome way to run your first marathon, especially if you are less confident/experienced as a runner. It's a very supportive group.
20. Post, run, enjoy
21. Do it. Do the marathon when you have a chance to do it. That includes many of my non HCMC running buddies.
22. Enjoy training - it is such a wonderful experience!
23. Dooooo it! Seriously running Boston was an incredible experience, and one you won't ever forget or regret.
24. DO HCMC!! It is a fantastic program!
25. DO IT! Also, don't overtrain early--you only need 4 months of a serious plan. (you can start in january and be fine as long as you are athletically active for the months before...)
26. Take advantage of the community and find running buddies, even if only for long runs. If you can find someone who runs your pace, it makes long runs and the marathon much more enjoyable and doable. Also, if you have some sort of injury, cross train or rest so that it can heal. If you miss out on a week or two of running, you will still be able to run the marathon.

19. Please describe any mental or physical strategies that you used on Marathon Day, either before or during your run (for example, adhering to a particular running-to-walking ratio, thinking motivating thoughts, working the crowd, saying positive things to yourself, visualizing certain images, performing a pre-Marathon ritual or routine, etc.).

1. I walked through the water stations and just tried to interact with the crowd as much as possible.
2. working the crowd was very helpful, maintaining a steady pace and watching my breathing rate
3. be positive! believe in yourself! let this be an experience you share with family or friends. Thinking of them will make getting through mile 20 easier when you've started to doubt yourself!
4. Draw your energy from the crowd. That is all.
5. Go REALLY slow at the beginning. I stuck with a slower runner for the first 7 miles which was really key in helping me keep them around 9 minutes. There are plenty of miles to run fast. After chilling for the first 7 miles and then not really picking it up until the half way point, I got in about 10-13 miles of a faster pace before I really started to slow down around mile 22. But this was post heartbreak hill and I could just glide downhill to the finish. Had I not started out slow, I think things would have been a lot worse.
6. Starting out at a predetermined (and quite slow/manageable pace) for the first half, in spite of this feeling unbearably slow at times, in order to have enough energy to take the hills at roughly the same pace.
7. When race day comes, all the hard work is over. You have trained hard for this, and the race is the reward. Enjoy it. Get adequate sleep 2 nights before the race. Carbo-load the pasta, but don't overdo it. Make sure you get plenty of electrolytes, I learned this the hard way.
8. Before marathon day I would try and get a sense for what you need to do for the 24 hours before a long run to make it as smooth as possible. Once you get a sense for what foods to eat and when, how much to hydrate before and during the run etc. then do not deviate from what works on marathon day. For marathon day I highly recommend cruising over to the sides for high fives in the spectator-heavy areas. Feeling the enthusiasm of the crowd and focusing on just making contact with as many spectators as possible will remove thoughts of pain and pacing from your mind entirely. Other than that I just ran.
9. I did not run the marathon, and had pulled out well in advance.
10. I had (literally) never gone on a run post-high school without an ipod. Not using an ipod was very intimidating to me. To compensate, I ran with a friend from New York and then (fortunately) met a fellow HCMC runner (and late HCMC registrant) who shared my time goals.
11. I made sure to pause and walk at every water station, to be sure that I got enough water/gatorade and didn't stress too much about pace. I also high-fived a lot of people, especially little kids, who looked so excited about it. And I ran with people (through the whole marathon, as well as enlisting some friends to do certain miles with me) - very motivating, especially as we did a pound at each mile, which made every section feel like an accomplishment.
12. I just gave myself entirely to the experience. I couldn't tell you a single thing that I thought about during those four hours. There is so much to see and so much to smile at. 26.2 miles and a marathon are distinguished by the thousands of cheerleaders you get along the marathon, and letting them set the tone for my race was so rewarding. I enjoyed myself; I pushed myself; and I was proud of myself and my fellow runners.
13. I know they say you're not supposed to do anything different on Marathon Day, but I did a lot of things differently. It was Passover, so I didn't eat my normal breakfast or carbo-load the night before. I also had never done a long run with fluids or gu, and I had both of those during the race. But it didn't seem to matter - I felt pretty good during the race. The gu was AMAZING at mile 18. I could immediately feel a difference. I think maybe training without fluids/food made running the real thing easier by comparison, even though it was 9 miles longer than my longest training run. I think the key thing is engaging with the spectators. They are SO MUCH FUN - pay attention to them! Whenever I would get tired I would go and slap some hands. Hearing all those people cheering for me really kept me going, because I remembered what an amazing thing I was doing. It's amazing to participate in something so big - the entire city comes out for the race, and you're participating in the 112th running of the marathon. It's really amazing to feel that you are part of something that big. Also running with a buddy is great. I ran the first nine miles with [name redacted], and then the next 7 with [name redacted]. Chatting with them made the early miles go by quickly and kept me from getting bored on the early miles. Then by the time I was by myself I was really to get in the zone and pound out the last few miles. Friends are also key. I saw a friend at mile 20 and it made SUCH A DIFFERENCE. She jumped in and ran with me for a little bit, and I was so happy afterwards that I just charged right up Heartbreak Hill. I can't emphasize enough how great it feels to see a friend on the course. I would recommend having them near the end of the race, when you really need it.

19. Please describe any mental or physical strategies that you used on Marathon Day, either before or during your run (for example, adhering to a particular running-to-walking ratio, thinking motivating thoughts, working the crowd, saying positive things to yourself, visualizing certain images, performing a pre-Marathon ritual or routine, etc.).

14. Lots of sports square gummies.
15. I count my breaths. I followed 3 members of the Boston Police Department who were keeping a good pace for the first half (then I lost them). I ate "shot blocks" twice to get quick energy (need to take with water, but they don't upset your stomach). I had my daughter meet my at the last 3 miles and run in with me, which was a huge help.
16. Before race day, I was really nervous, but when I expressed this to my roommate, she responded with "well, what are you going to do, just stop running and walk off the course after all these months of training?" and I realized that no matter what happened or how long it took, I was going to get across the finish line somehow (assuming I was physically on my feet). During the actual race, I had gu's at the 5, 10, 15, 18, and 22. I made a conscious effort to smile as much as I could, and did for the entire first half. I didn't even realize I was doing it until about mile 6 because I was genuinely enjoying myself. I definitely took advantage of the crowd, high-fiving people especially in the last few miles. And on Heartbreak Hill, I was running directly behind another girl and I imagined that my feet were attached to hers and I was just a puppet that she was dragging up the hill. That way, I was able to imagine that she was doing all the work, and I was just along for the ride. A little weird, but hey it worked.
17. i just kept my cool and telling myself that I'm not a quitter
18. The crowd is the biggest thing. if you interact with the crowd, you get so pumped up and hyped up that the adrenaline doesn't let you stop. Also, don't start off too fast, I ran over a minute faster pace the last 13 miles than the first. Its really nice to have some energy left for those last 6 miles that you can basically sprint.
19. I found high-fiving people on the sidelines really beneficial. I also memorized some inspiring lines of poetry and said them over to myself as I was running.
20. reserve energy on the front end. Everyone has a desire to come out hot in the start. It is all part of the excitement of the day. But reserving energy for the famous hills of Boston is crucial.
21. At first, I wanted to qualify in 3:10, so the first 20 miles went about 7-7:10 pace pretty easily. Then I cramped up and I thought I my legs were done, but I thought about all the fundraising I had done, the friends who were going to cheer me on at the miles ahead (even though they didn't show up), and generally, from my HS experience, I never quit at anything running-related so I ran through the cramps. I wouldn't say I visualized anything. During races, I stick to the philosophy of being stoic, so I never get pumped up physically, never do much pre-race motivation, never talk to myself. I motivate myself with my head, and that always works for me.
22. I thought of how much training I had put in and knew that I could do it. I tried to tell myself that this was just another long run - although with a lot more support. And it was great to be able to look forward to seeing my friends at certain checkpoints
23. I ran with two other guys from HCMC. Having two guys running at the same pace gave me people to talk to and share the experience with. This made it a lot more fun, and also helped pull me through some tough spots. I STRONGLY recommend finding a running partner to make it through a lot of the race with, it helped a great deal.
24. I thought motivating thoughts and spoke to myself, and the most inspiring part was working the crowd.
25. I ran with a group during the entire marathon and was talking the whole time so that helped me get through the beginning. Also, knowing that I had friends coming out to support me, that my grandparents were at the finish line, made the choice of quitting not even an option; I couldn't stop anywhere because then they wouldn't see me and they had been nice enough to come see me so I had a duty--not just to myself--but to them to continue running. I also visualized the marathon a million times, the day (and night before) which helped me run it. Mostly, though I was just so juiced up, my adrenaline was flowing so much that I couldn't have stopped if I wanted to. I just was loving it.
26. 1. See if you can run with people you know. They'll keep you going. 2. I stopped and walked for about 10 seconds whenever I got a drink of water/gatorade. It's hard to drink while running, and the short break always feels good. 3. Use the crowd! Slap the hand of every child that you see! I actually found that when I did this, I would start to run faster without even noticing it. The Boston Marathon has more live spectators than any other event in the country, so take advantage of it.

20. What else is on your mind about HCMC? Radical ideas, idiosyncrasies, etc., are all welcome – anything goes!

1. I think HCMC should have more get togethers! Maybe watch inspirational running movies or something.
2. We could have used one more masseuse after the race
3. desserts after were SO good. the pre-marathon meeting about last-minute thoughts really made me feel a little better.
4. THIS WAS AMAZING!!!! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!!
5. I think making the bandit option more available would be good. People who don't know marathons don't necessarily know that this is an option and I think making this more clear to potential members might bring some more runners into the fold after we fill up the official slots.
6. See above about non-HCMC participants!
7. Listen to [name redacted], especially if you are a first time marathoner. He knows what is going on, and he has more experience than you do, even if you're a former cross country star and think you know everything about running.
8. This program is great. A huge thanks goes out to all the participants and to [name redacted] for his tireless efforts at organization and motivation.
9. woohooo! congrats marathoners! i'm going to apply again next year :)
10. We need more massage people at the afterparty. We should hold the party in a nicer space than Quincy House, which has one of the worst common rooms on campus. We should hold a movie night that night after the afterparty -- are there any good running movies? We should buy a MyMarathonDVD and show the last year's DVD so people can see (1) what the race looked like, broadly, and (2) if they want to buy this thing.
11. The afterparty was really lovely - so nice to get great food and just relax and talk over the race with everyone. It was also really useful to have a connection with UHS; I was able to schedule a couple appointments really easily and quickly.
12. It's really hard for me to look back over two years of HCMC experience and reflect concisely on it. It has absolutely changed my outlook on myself and on my life, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to learn and explore through such a new and exciting medium. I really admire this program and the freedom is allots to participants while still providing a supportive and meaningful community. I extend my infinite thanks to all who wrote encouraging words over the listerv, who accompanied me on runs, and who gave of themselves so fully to make HCMC such a rewarding experience for me.
13. The afterparty was AMAZING! Also, I'm really happy that the HCMC community is pretty tightly knit this year. I feel like I got to know people over the course of the year, so that I could run with people during the race. I also feel like now I have a good community of people to run with.
14. They say that runners in general are nice people. Marathoners have the distinct quality of being stubborn, a little crazy, but certainly have 'nice' happening in spades.
15. Thank you!
16. I thought it was an amazing experience overall and would LOVE to be involved again next year!
17. keep it simple, grass roots. why change a great thing
18. I am going to be in pain for the next 3 days, but its the best pain of my life.
19. N/A
20. N/A
21. The dessert party could have had fresher fruit.
22. not much - I think it's a great way to give Harvard students the opportunity to run the marathon!
23. What an amazing experience. I thought that the organized bus out to Hopkinton was HUGE. It made sure we all went out together, and helped me meet other HCMC runners who were running the same pace I was. This was a great help. I can't imagine what getting out there would have been like otherwise.
24. The afterparty was great! The desserts were awesome. And I went to UHS for a stress fracture and was taken care of right away.
25. I think it is a great program. it fosters a team atmosphere that is completely nurturing and not-at-all-detrimentally competitive. It allows for us runners to make running (what can be the most selfish and lonely of activities) communal, both in the team aspect and in the fact that we're doing something positive by raising money for PBHA and Project Health. It's just awesome. I really appreciate the opportunity so much.
26. We brought a large group down to Hyannis and did the half-marathon in February. A few optional organized outing/races like that one might be fun for the Harvard running community.